

Prach and Sathae

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Ouk Ratha

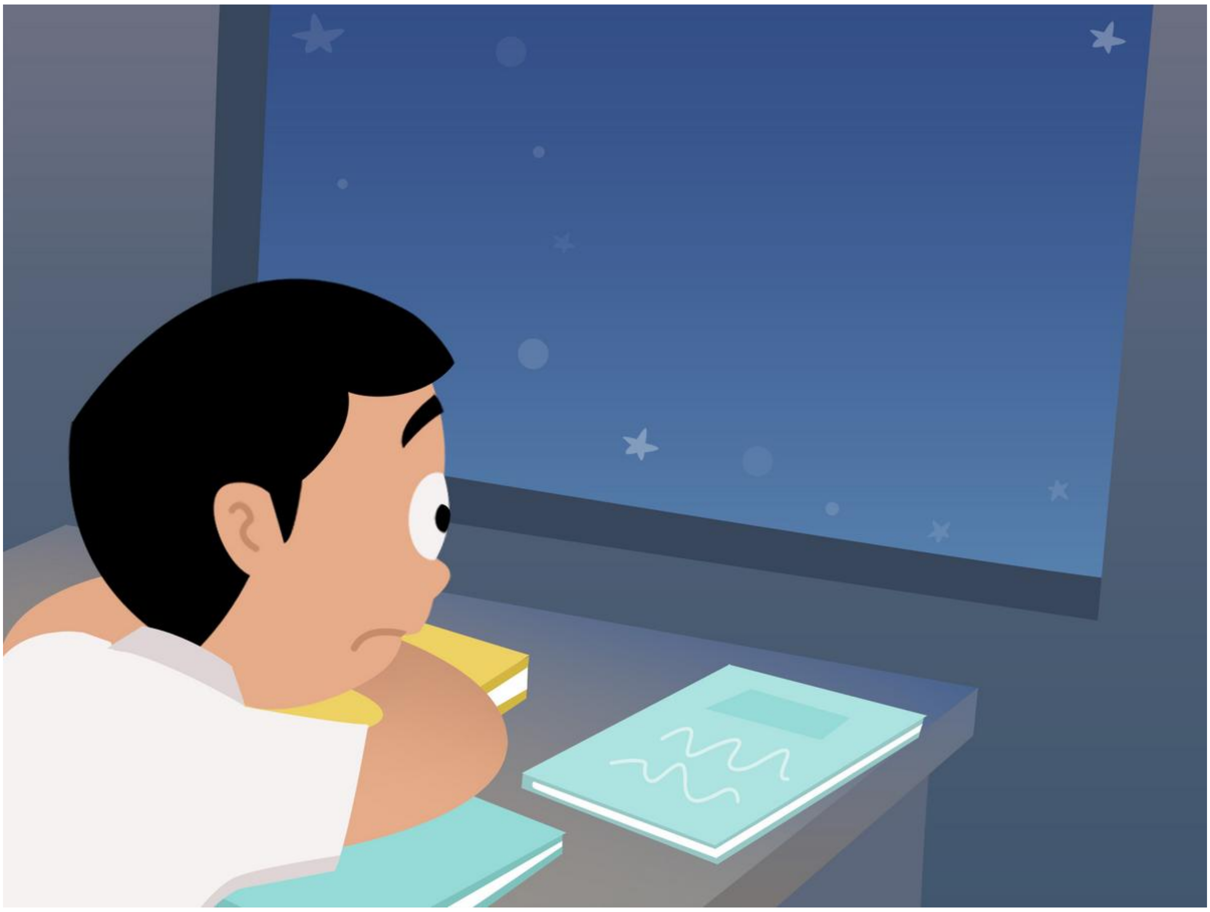
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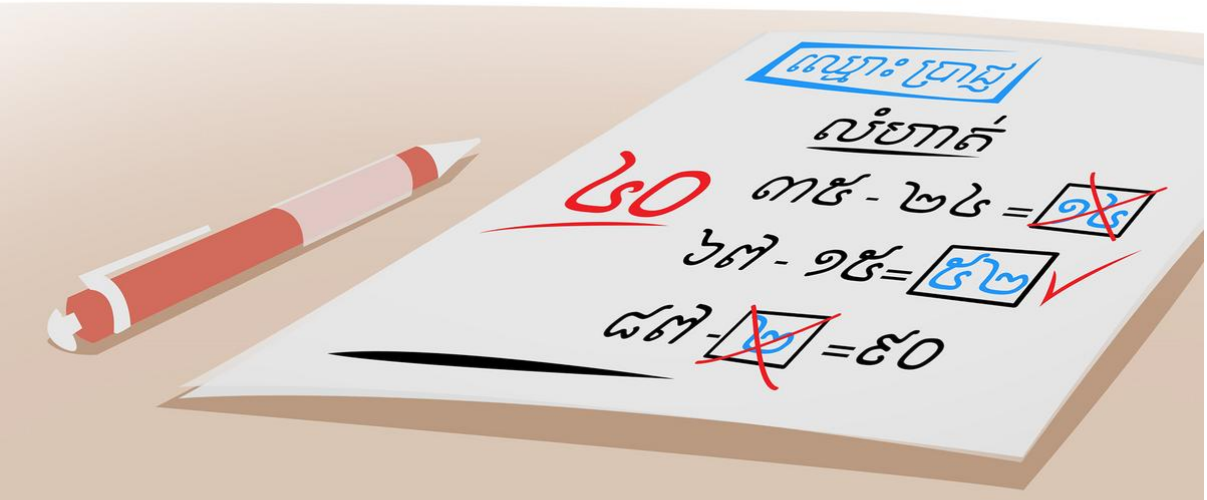
My name is Prach. I'm in fourth grade, class A, at Raing Tor Primary School. My father works in Phnom Penh. My mother works for a family on the farthest edge of the village. So I stay with my grandmother most of the time.



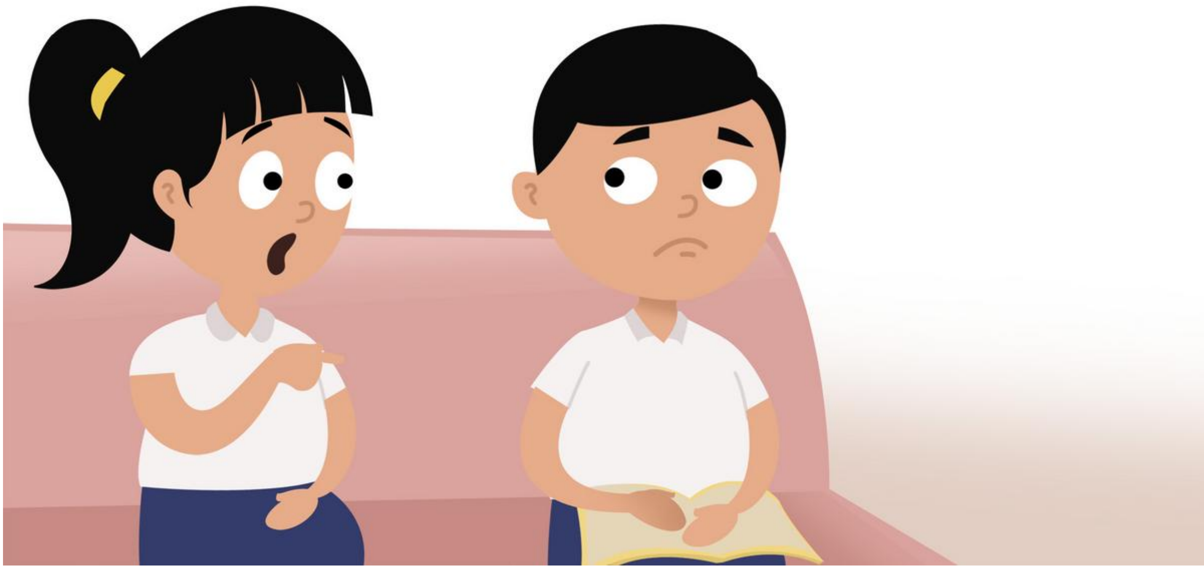
Earlier this year, in December, another boy began bullying me and taking my money every day. He is a sixth grade student named Sathae. He told me not to tell anyone or he would hurt me. I did not know what to do.



I felt numb. At home, I could not do the chores my mother gave me. At school, I could not focus on my classwork. Usually, I am quick to learn Ms. Biramo's lessons.



The teacher noticed that I made a lot of mistakes in the January exams, which was unusual. She asked me to meet with her: ’Prach, what happened to you? Why did you get almost all the questions wrong?’ she asked me. ’Nothing is wrong, Ms. Biramo!’ I answered.



I could not tell the truth because I was afraid that Sathae would hurt me. But Ms. Biramo did not believe me. She talked to my best friends Vety. Vety came to me and asked: ’What’s wrong with you? The teacher asked me about you yesterday.’



I didn’t know how long Ms. Biramo had been watching me. ’Prach,’ she said, ’Vety told me that Sathae bullies you and takes your money. Tell me, is this true?’ I was shocked. I was afraid that Sathae would hurt me, so I lied to her: ’That’s not true, Ms. Biramo!’



She got very angry, and she left the room. I watched her go up to Sathae. ’Sathae, why do you bully Prach and take his money?’ she asked. ’I did not do that!’ exclaimed Sathae. ’If you don’t confess, I will tell the school principal to take action,’ Ms. Biramo said.



She looked serious. Sathae became pale, but he still did not confess. Ms. Biramo walked angrily toward the administrative office. Then, Sathae charged at me. His face was like a monster. I was so scared that I shouted and ran to the teacher for help.



Sathae tightened his hand into a fist. He was so angry, but he did not dare hit me in front of the teacher. Ms. Biramo took us to the principal’s office. ’Look, Sathae! Why do you want to hurt Prach?’ the school principal asked. ’I hit him because he talked bad about me,’ Sathae said. ’Prach, did Sathae take your money?’ the school principal asked me.



I could no longer hide it. I was afraid that Sathae would continue to hurt me if I did not tell the truth. ’Yes, teacher! Sathae has taken my money every day since last December,’ I said. ’You’re a liar,’ Sathae said. ’I have never taken your money. Teacher, don’t believe him!’ ’If you don’t tell the truth,’ the principal said, ’I will call your guardians to meet me. I am warning you, if Prach has any injury, you’ll be held responsible. Do you understand?’



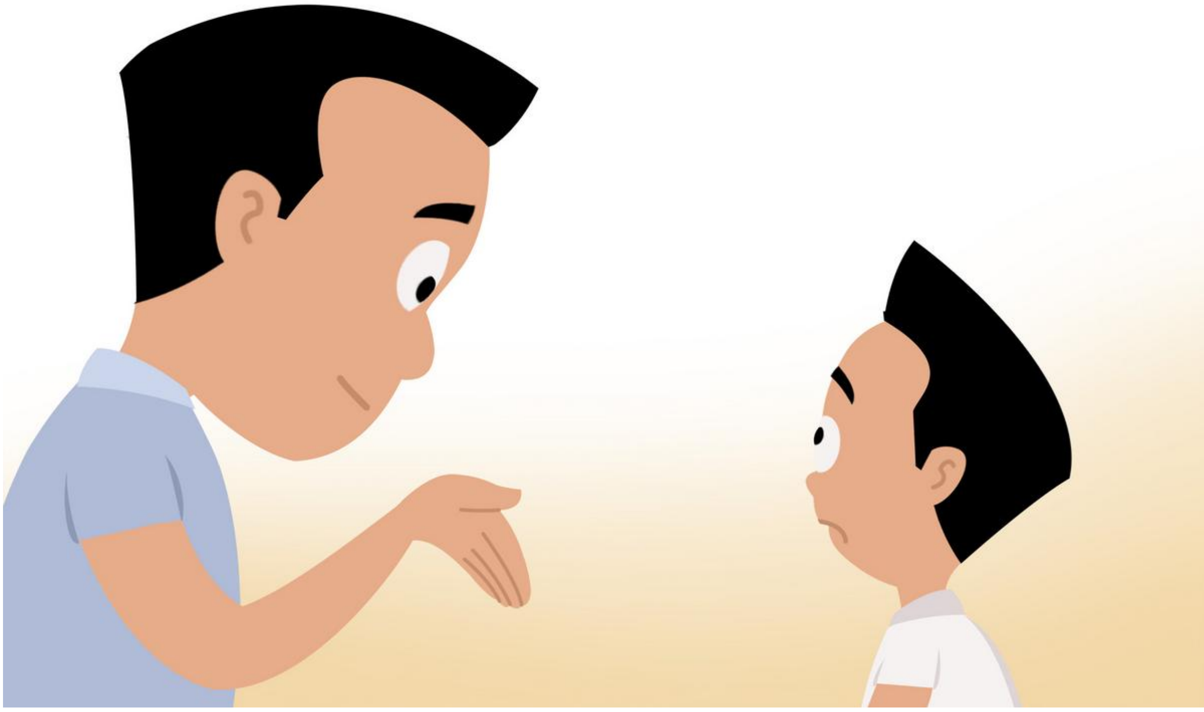
The principal wrote letters to Sathae’s guardian and my mother. Ms. Biramo took me home and gave the letters to my mother and to Sathae’s guardians, since our homes are near each other. On the way home, she warned me not to go out, in case Sathae decided to look for me.



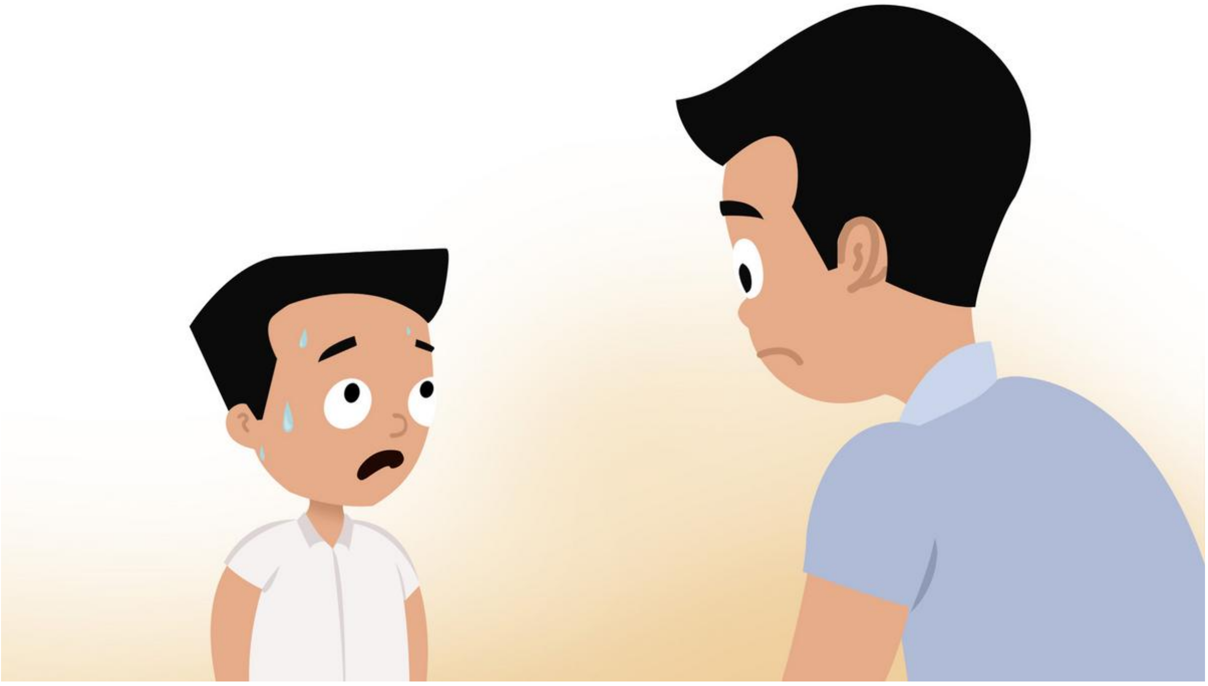
In the morning, my mother and I went to the principal’s office. When we arrived, I saw Ms. Biramo, the school principal, and Sathae’s teacher were waiting for us. ’Please come in,’ the school principal said to my mother.



Soon, Sathae and his father arrived. Sathae's face seemed more pale than usual. My mother was startled when she saw Sathae and his father. The principal then told everyone about the bullying.



My mother was speechless, and Sathae’s father got very angry. He knew his son should not have done those things. He asked his son firmly: ’Sathae! Tell me the truth. Did you do that?’



Sathae’s lips became pale and he stammered: ’Because you gave my old exam papers to him and praised him. That’s why I did it.’ ’Those were your old fourth grade exams that you no longer needed,’ his father said. ’I told your aunt to give the papers to her son. She cannot read, so the papers were to help check her son’s answers.’



’How could I know that!’ Sathae said, ’I always hear you and Aunt praising Prach, saying that he does his schoolwork well.’ ’Now you know,’ said his father. ’Are you still angry at Prach?’

’I’m sorry, Dad!’ Sathae said. ’I was wrong.’

’No need to say you’re sorry to me,’ his father replied. ’Say you’re sorry to Prach and the teachers!’



Sathae apologized to me and the teachers. Everyone accepted his apology because Sathae had always been an outstanding student. He had never done anything wrong, before this. My mother was shocked. One boy was her son, and the other a child she had taken care of since he was very young.



Seeing my mother cry, Sathae became sad. It seemed that he loved my mother. He comforted her, saying, ’Aunt, please stop crying! I promise that I will stop bullying Prach. I will take care of him in school from now on.’



My mother was very happy when she heard that. She thanked Sathae and said to me: ’From now on, if you have any problems at school, you must tell your teachers. And when you get home, you must tell your grandmother and me. You must not hide it. You’re lucky that we were able to resolve this problem before it got bigger.’



The school principal did not have anymore questions, but he reminded Sathae not to bully. If this happened again, the school would take disciplinary action. After the meeting, Sathae’s father and my mother went home. Sathae and I went to our classes.



During the break, Sathae handed me a letter. It read: ’Prach, I’m sorry. I should not have bullied you. Actually, I still have the money I took from you. I have not spent it. Here it is in the envelope.’



When I saw my money, I was very happy. I counted it, and it was all there. I decided to save it. Vety was also happy because we had not played together for a long time. I'd like to tell you more stories, but my time is finished, so I will say goodbye for now.

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Original Story

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